

P R E S E N T

A B S E N T

Canlı
Alive

GÜRBAY HİZ
EMRE HÜNER

Halı Altı
Under the Rug

MONA MAHALL & ASLI SERBEST
METEHAN ÖZCAN

VAR YOK

Anıtsı
Monumentesque

FİRUZAN MELİKE SÜMERTAŞ
DENİZ TORTUM

Küratörler | Curators

MERVE ELVEREN
MERİÇ ÖNER

YUNT

11.10.2025
— 16.08.2026

PRESENTABSENT

This booklet accompanies the exhibition *PresentAbsent*, curated by Merve Elveren and Meriç Öner, on view at YUNT from October 11, 2025, to August 16, 2026.

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Alive
Gürbey Hiz
Emre Hüner
11.10.2025 — 01.02.2026

Under the Rug
Mona Mahall & Aslı Serbest
Metehan Özcan
04.02.2026 — 03.05.2026

Monumentesque
Firuzan Melike Sümertaş
Deniz Tortum
06.05.2026 — 16.08.2026

YUNT

VarYok

PresentAbsent

Kuratörler / Curators
Merve Elveren
Meriç Öner

11.10.2025 — 16.08.2026

It is impossible to pinpoint that first moment when the perception of time became complicated, boundaries blurred irreversibly, and the sense of belonging evaporated. Even if it exists, it is recorded differently in each mind. Perhaps it was a rupture created by moments piling up on top of each other. Alternatively, perhaps it never actually happened. *Today*, however, points to a time where all uncertainties intersect. Because expectations for the future clash with current anxieties, and past dreams have clearly failed to materialize. The worlds of like-minded communities are at odds with each other; the voices of individual positions are faint; life beyond the physical is violent, and *truths* are entirely dubious.

Are the things we once accepted as absolute being shaken to their core for the first time? Or were the sudden shifts that appeared recently merely a rehearsal for what is now already underway?

Through people, objects, places, and times, *PresentAbsent* reveals past and future imaginings that are tangential to each other. Participants invited to the programme prepared for YUNT by Merve Elveren and Meriç Öner reinterpret their research and productions through the lens of a destabilized tension between the private and public. Opening up side paths to the institution's current explorations, the presentation unfolds over the course of a year in three sections that leap across different moments and geographies.

The first part of the project, *PresentAbsent: Alive*, brings together a selection from the critical modernity atlas created by architectural historian Gürbey Hiz, based on the science and literature magazine *Servet-i Fünûn*, with artist Emre Hüner's video *Neochronophobia* (2015) and the ceramic figures he designed for the video.¹ The progressive future delineated by Hiz from this late Ottoman periodical unfolds through scenes stretching from the home to the street, from the sky to the underground. In Hüner's sculptures, reminiscent of archaeological findings, one encounters rudimentary tools resembling jawbones and vertebrae, animal fossils, ambiguous ritual objects, meteor fragments

1 *Servet-i Fünûn* (Wealth of Sciences), a prominent Ottoman scientific and literary journal published from 1891 onwards, became a key platform for the introduction of modernist ideas in literature, science and the arts.

and menhir-like forms, all presented within architectural shells they inhabit. In the installation at YUNT, these figures, independent of the video, represent lives that continue in another time or place.

The second part of the series, *PresentAbsent: Under the Rug*, proposes alternative perspectives on the past and future through the long-term research of artists Metehan Özcan, Mona Mahall, and Aslı Serbest. Özcan's photographic images and collages blend rural, industrial, and domestic elements within the city, suggesting scenes where boundaries blur and a sense of unease prevails. Mahall and Serbest, drawing from two texts—one scientific, the other fictional—form *newold european* project that reimagines Europe as a geographically relocated space with fluid boundaries; thus addressing the idea of an egalitarian and inclusive society characteristic of a new geopolitical order that offers an alternative to the oppressive structure of today's European Union, with its violently defined borders.

The final part of the year-long programme, *PresentAbsent: Monumentesque*, centres on filmmaker Deniz Tortum's 2011 film *Dünya* (World) and architectural historian Firuzan Melike Sümertaş's 2017 research on buildings commissioned by women during the Ottoman period. Selected buildings from this study, which focuses on the architectural activities of women in Istanbul, mostly members of the royal family and their close circle, are presented in their current state at YUNT. Tortum's experimental film *Dünya* responds to the poem of the same name by poet, translator and historian Efe Murad. In the film, a camera wandering through an unknown time and space traces the efforts of singular and collective attempts at being (or not), belonging (or not), and harmonising (or not).

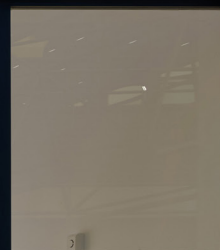
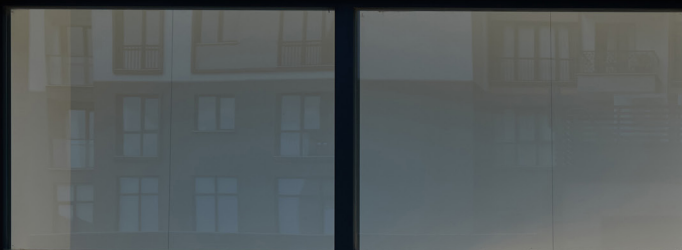
As a continuation of YUNT's efforts to reveal the responsibilities and awareness that a contemporary cultural institution should undertake, *PresentAbsent* expands its content through talks and workshops. Across three parts unfolding over the course of a year, the works interlock; through works that reference previous and subsequent sections, and objects that decrease or increase in number, participants accompany YUNT's inquiry throughout the exhibition.



- 1 **EMRE HÜNER**
XenoProp
2015
Mixed media
Dimensions variable
- 2 **EMRE HÜNER**
Neochronophobia
2015
3-channel HD video
38 minutes
- 3 **EMRE HÜNER**
Echo
2014
Color pencil on paper
42,5 × 52 cm
- 4 **GÜRBAY HİZ**
Atlas of Imaginations, Constructions, Experiences
2020
Digital print and sound
Dimensions variable
- 5 **MONA MAHALL & ASLI SERBEST**
newold europe map
2015
- 6 **METEHAN ÖZCAN**
Illustrated Information, A11
2013
- 7 **FİRUZAN MELİKE SÜMERTAŞ**
Büyük Valide Han
2024
- 8 **DENİZ TORTUM**
Efe Murad's rewriting of his poem titled *Dünya* [World] from his memories
2025

דאנץ

דאנץ







↔
XenoProp
 Details



① *XenoProp*
 2015
 Mixed media
 Dimensions variable

EMRE HÜNER



2 *Neochronophobiq*
2015
3-channel HD video
38 minutes

Emre Hüner's three-channel video *Neochronophobiq* (2015) focuses on landscapes of Anatolian Neolithic ruins, archaeological sites, volcanic land formations, and stone quarries, alongside human-made interiors reminiscent of isolation chamber experiments, as well as various sculptural objects found within these sites and spaces. Serving as the main characters of *Neochronophobiq*, the archaeological objects - simultaneously organic and inorganic, of unknown functions - displayed on the central screen. These objects connect interior and exterior spaces while materialising the contradictions between scientific and speculative interpretations. The character portrayed by Tomás Lemarquis, who carries and collects these moving sculptures, activates the encounter with the environment as well as with geological and geographical time through architectural ruins, unidentified topographies, and materiality. In *Neochronophobiq*, both objects and the landscapes appear alive. Metaphors produced for a petrified language, the sound of cracking glass, tangible knowledge in continuous motion and gradual transformation, ceremonial objects, modes of thought, and fragments of fired and glazed clay all contribute to the creation of a non-linear narrative within a post-human condition.

Neochronophobiq leads towards outside-time and to the idea of a world beyond mind, language, and comprehension. The work's title is itself a construction: *Neochronophobiq* combines the "new" with the "neolithic." *Chronophobia* refers to the fear arising from the rapid passage of time, while *Ubiquity* is omnipresence; it points to the state or capacity of being everywhere at once.

Courtesy of the artist and Sylvia Kouvali (Piraeus/London)

EMRE HÜNER



3 *Echo*
2014
Color pencil on paper
42,5 × 52 cm



GÜRBEY HİZ



4 Atlas of Imaginations, Constructions, Experiences

2020

Digital print and sound

Dimensions variable

Sound Recodings:

Agah Hüseyin (1895), "Paris Muhabirinden Mektub-ı Mahsus: Havada Balonla Seyahat,"

Servet-i Fünûn, no 231

Ahmed İhsan (1907), "Sokak Manzaraları," *Servet-i Fünûn*, no 826

Anonim (1908), "Paris'in Bir Pazar Günü Eğlencesi: Apartmanları Gezen Bir Kadın,"

Servet-i Fünûn, no 875

A.N. (1899), "İstanbul Postası," *Servet-i Fünûn*, no 446

The illustrated journal *Servet-i Fünûn*, one of the most influential periodicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ottoman Empire, was first published in Istanbul in 1891. In addition to fostering intellectual and scientific production, the journal played a crucial role in popularising fields such as art, literature, industry, and agriculture. Alongside publishing works by prominent local writers of the period, *Servet-i Fünûn* also gave space to international voices through translated texts.

Examining late Ottoman modernisation through the narratives in *Servet-i Fünûn*, the *Atlas of Imaginations, Constructions, and Experiences** is a series of visual and textual studies by architectural historian Gürbey Hiz. Focusing on the journal's first 1000 issues (1891–1910), the project uncovers the writings of various authors at the turn of the twentieth century, with the aim of rethinking the social spaces of the period through the lenses of imagination, construction, and experience. In contrast to the grand narratives of modernisation foregrounded in historiography, the series brings to light the minor stories that unfolded over time. By assembling montages of diverse spatial representations—ranging from the sky to the underground, from the street to the home—it offers an alternative atlas of the plural, paradoxical, and layered experiences of modernity in late Ottoman urban life. Methodologically based on cinematography and media archaeology, these montages propose the opportunity to revisit the ever-changing processes of socialisation of spaces within a heterogeneous temporality from today's perspective.

* This study is a part of Gürbey Hiz's doctoral dissertation, completed in 2020 under the supervision of Ayşe Şentürer in the Architectural Design program at Istanbul Technical University.



MONA MAHALL & ASLI SERBEST



5 newold europe map
2025

METEHAN ÖZCAN

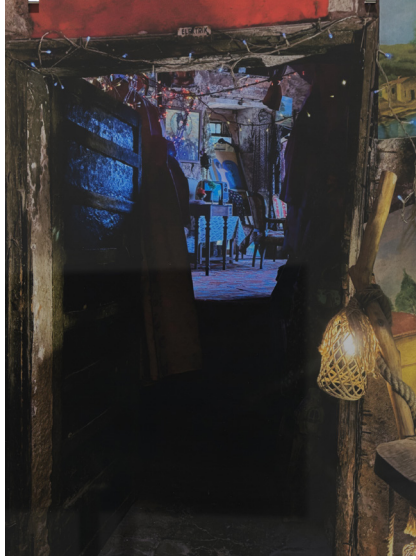


6 Illustrated Information, A11
2013

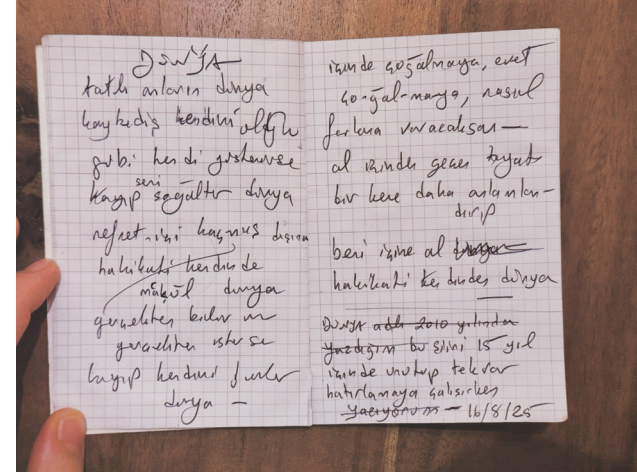
FİRUZAN MELİKE SÜMERTAŞ



7 Büyük Valide Han
2024



DENİZ TORTUM



8 Efe Murad's rewriting of his poem
titled Dünya [World] from his memories
2025

MERVE ELVEREN Curator and researcher. Her research-driven curatorial practice focuses on the social and cultural landscape of Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s, exploring critical debates and emergent institutional formations shaped by shifting political urgencies. From August 2011 to September 2018, Elveren was part of the Research & Programs team at Salt. She was the curator of the Guest Programme of the 39th EVA International-Ireland's Biennial (2020-2021) titled *Little did they know*. In 2022, she co-curated *In Time / On Ground*, an archival project developed in collaboration with the Women's Library and Information Centre (Istanbul) within the framework of the 17th Istanbul Biennial. She also curated *Translated into Socialism*, researched by Sezgin Boynik and Tefik Rada (Pykë-Presje), which opened at Salt Galata in 2024 and at Moderna galerija (Ljubljana) in 2025.

She co-edited *Cengiz Çekil: 21.08.1945-10.11.2015* (2020), *Day to Day* (2025), and *National Identity and Feminist Praxis: Perspectives from Kosovo and Turkey* (2025). In 2018, Elveren was the recipient of the Independent Vision Award for Curatorial Achievement, granted by Independent Curators International, New York.

GÜRBAY HİZ Architect, architectural historian and academic. He graduated from the Department of Architecture at Istanbul Technical University (ITU) in

2008, completed the Master's Program in Architectural Design at the same university in 2013, and received his PhD in 2020 with the dissertation "Narrativizing Social Space in Servet-i Fünûn: An Atlas of Imaginations, Constructions and Experiences (1891-1910)." For this research, he received ITU's 'Best PhD Thesis Award.' Between 2011 and 2017, he worked at DS Architecture, where he received several awards in architectural competitions. In 2021, he pursued his postdoctoral research at the University of Washington. Since 2017, he has been a faculty member in the Department of Architecture at Kadir Has University, where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses, participates in research projects, and contributes to academic publications.

EMRE HÜNER Artist. Working across drawing, video, sculpture, installation, and writing, Hüner's practice focuses on constructed narratives and eclectic assemblages or structures, exploring the subjects of archaeology, failed utopias and technology, based on found material and archival sources. Through on-site filming, immersive installations, and experiments in sculptural forms, his work questions ideas of progress and futurity by reimagining architectural entities, and speculating on the language and materiality of organic and artificial forms.

His recent solo exhibitions include *Substrata Styrene* (Sylvia Kouvali, Piraeus,

2024), *Iconoclastic Nuclear Plastic* (Sylvia Kouvali, Piraeus, 2023), and *[ELEKTROİZOLASYON]: Unknown Parameter Extro-Record* (Arter, Istanbul, 2021). Recent group exhibitions he participated include to carry (16th Sharjah Biennial, 2025), *How to Hold Your Breath* (9th Asia Art Biennial, NTMoFA, Taichung, 2024) and *Cmd P for 2079* (Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam, 2020). Hüner's works are held in the collections of Arter, Tate, Centre Pompidou, Princeton University Art Museum, Spencer Museum, and Van Abbe Museum.

MONA MAHALL & ASLI SERBEST Working at the intersection of art and architecture, Mahall and Serbest have pursued a collective practice since 2007. Drawing on found objects, unfinished elements, texts, and specific sites, they explore the poetic and political possibilities of space. Through installations, models, videos, and texts, they create research-based spatial works across both analogue and digital media. Their projects adopt a feminist methodology, focusing on non-linear, unfinished forms and process-oriented formats. They aim to question power relations and to make overlooked pieces of knowledge visible, in order to develop alternative paths for our lives, schools, and online and offline movements.

Their work has been exhibited at institutions including the Pera Museum, E-Flux Screening Room, the Venice

Biennale, Ural Biennale, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien (Berlin), Riverrun (Istanbul), Württembergischer Kunstverein (Stuttgart), Storefront for Art and Architecture (New York), HKW (Berlin), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, and the New Museum (New York). In 2019, they curated the 7th International Sinop Biennial under the title *A Politics of Location*.

MERİÇ ÖNER Architect, curator, and researcher. Öner has been working on design and architectural culture since 2005. She was the founding associate director at Salt, where she shaped the institution's critical approach to studies of the built environment. Her inquiries into material culture initiated local and international conversations and facilitated the public presentation of multiple narratives and timelines through exhibitions, workshops, talks, and screenings.

During her tenure as director, she focused on Salt's role as a co-learning institution, advancing both the access to and dissemination of digitized archives. She launched the *Office of Useful Art* in partnership with Asociación de Arte Útil. She also developed long-term collaborations with local institutions, most notably with Kadir Has University, which led to the digitisation of the unfinished *Istanbul Encyclopedia (1945–1975)* by Reşad Ekrem Koçu and its archival material. Since 2022, she has been leading

Meriç Öner Culture Works, providing strategic consultancy and developing exhibitions, publications, and independent programmes.

METEHAN ÖZCAN Artist and an academic. After completing his undergraduate studies in Interior Architecture and Environmental Design at Bilkent University, Metehan Özcan earned his master's degree in Visual Communication Design at Bilgi University. In his artistic practice, Özcan explores the traces of modernist design in social memory through photographs and archival materials. By bringing together technical, promotional, and commemorative images of various spaces, he constructs multilayered narratives.

His works have been exhibited at the Pavilion of Turkey, 14th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia; the 3rd Istanbul Design Biennial; Salt Ulus; Istanbul Modern; Milli Reasürans Art Gallery; Ark Kültür; Depo Istanbul; Studio X; Hayy Open Space; MarsIstanbul; and Galeri Nev Ankara.

FİRUZAN MELİKE SÜMERTAŞ Architect, historian, and tracer of urban narratives. Sümertaş completed her undergraduate and postgraduate education at the Middle East Technical University Department of Architecture and the Master's Programme in Architectural History. She obtained her doctoral degree from the Department of History at Boğaziçi University. She explores

the layers of urban, visual, architectural, and cultural history embedded in the stones and waters of Ottoman Istanbul. Sümertaş's work springs from her deep fascination with Istanbul, sometimes following the traces of the Greek-Orthodox community, at other times focusing on women patrons.

Sümertaş currently serves as coordinator of the *IstanΠόλις* project, directed by Christine Philiou, and as co-curator—alongside Namık Erkal and Haris Theodorelis Rigas—of the exhibition project *Phanariot Materialities*, scheduled to open at ANAMED in February 2026.

DENİZ TORTUM Filmmaker, artist, and researcher. His works have been screened at international film festivals including the Venice Film Festival, SXSW, IFFR, IDFA, Sheffield Doc/Fest, Hot Docs, True/False, and Dokufest. His latest feature film, *Phases of Matter* (2020), won the Best Documentary Award at the 39th Istanbul Film Festival and 57th International Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival. His short film, *Our Ark* (2021, co-directed with Kathryn Hamilton), received the Best Short Film Award at the 41st Istanbul Film Festival.

Tortum has worked as a researcher at the MIT Open Documentary Lab and MIT Transmedia Storytelling Initiative, focusing his research on immersive media. In 2019, he was featured in *Filmmaker Magazine's* "25 New Faces of Independent Film."

ABOUT YUNT

Located in Sultanbeyli, YUNT is a non-profit art and interaction space. It aims to increase the society's opportunities to encounter artistic activities. In addition to its exhibitions and events, it enables those it comes into contact with to establish new sensory relationships with the world through its educational program and supported publications. It aims to help increase the potential for social change through the experience and interaction opportunities offered by the place.

YUNT supports art production and intellectual thought with its event program and incentive policy.

